

Aphia FOR A WORLD REGISTER OF MARINE SPECIES (WoRMS)

Appeltans Ward¹, Mark J. Costello², Bart Vanhoorne¹, Wim Decock¹, Leen Vandepitte¹, Francisco Hernandez¹, Jan Mees¹ and Edward Vanden Berghe³

¹ Flanders Marine Institute, Vlaams Instituut voor de Zee, VLIZ – InnovOcean site,
Wandelaarkaai 7, B-8400 Oostende, Belgium
E-mail: warda@vliz.be

² University of Auckland, Leigh Marine Laboratory, Box 349, Warkworth, New Zealand

³ Rutgers University, Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences, 71 Dudley Road, New Brunswick, NJ 08901, USA

An authoritative and global register of all marine species is urgently needed to facilitate biological data management and exchange, the integration of ecological and biodiversity data with non-biological ocean data, and to assist taxonomists in describing new species, revisions and correcting past nomenclatural confusion. The exercise of producing this list has added benefits in fostering collaboration between experts at a global scale and maintaining taxonomic expertise. Easy access to the register will allow local ecologists and biologists to use correct taxonomic names, and will encourage addition of overlooked species to the list. This will in turn stimulate a.o. biodiversity science and biogeographic and evolutionary research. This 'World Register of Marine Species'(WoRMS) is the logical next step for ocean biodiversity informatics (OBI) to become an everyday and essential supporting infrastructure for the marine sciences, monitoring and environmental management. WoRMS is a standards based, quality controlled, expert validated, open-access infrastructure for research, education, and data and resource management. It builds on experience in developing the European Register of Marine Species and the Ocean Biogeographic Information System, and will collaborate with and contribute to the GBIF's ECAT and planned Global Names Architecture, Species 2000, the Catalogue of Life, the Ocean Biogeographic Information System, the Encyclopaedia of Life, SeaLifeBase, IOC's International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange, and related initiatives. The Aphia database, developed and maintained by the Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ), serves as the IT platform for WoRMS. Currently, well over 100 world leading taxonomists are contributing towards this World Register of Marine Species. We will demonstrate the WoRMS webportal and all its functionalities, such as the web-based services and the online edit tool for the taxonomic experts. For further details see <http://www.marinespecies.org>.